

I know that I have finally given up trying to teach Art. I hope that I have given up teaching altogether. I don't mean to leave the educational system or get a real job or anything that drastic but rather just not be a teacher, ie. one who devotes ones life to the perptuation of prior knowledge with the firm belief that one knows what one is doing and is certified in some manner to pass judgment on others less fortunate. Admittedly that is a rather harsh definition but I don't think it is too far off the mark, at least not in my experience with the educational community. I have decided to give in to my instincts and spend the rest of my life making mistakes. I want to be somewhere between a curmudgeon and a blunderer, but not a teacher.

I am currently teaching video image processing in the Cinema department of SUNY Binghamton. The students I work with are enrolled in a liberal arts school. Their biggest problem is trying to figure out how to get a job when they graduate. I don't understand why they go to a liberal arts school, so most of my time with them is spent trying to understand that problem, exposing them to visual art and thinking outloud in front of them. Usually, if I'm outrages enough, they will think back at me. When they leave they have some notion about Art and that is all I expect. Occasionally one of them develops further but that is unusual.

I have taught for 25 years. In the fifties I could have straightened out the educational institutions if only they would have listened to me. In the sixties I was denied tenure but the students dedicated the yearbook to me. In the seventies I was able to start my own institution, and in the eighties either

wisdom or bravado is creeping into my life. I now feel able to say what I want to with the confidence that I am more than likely correct in my observations but if I am not then I will learn something. I feel that I am where I should have been in the fifties and in part I blame not being there on the educational systems that infected me during my life.

I have been able to identify a few problems in the educational scheme and have also been able to do something about the solutions. I feel that the basic responsibility for a students education is the students. That is not to say that the person in the "teaching" position has no responsibility, but rather that the student is the one who has to take control of his or her life and not abrogate that position to ~~social~~ ^{EDUCATIONAL} correctness. I guess I'm speaking about the arts and research interests in the sciences. It would be difficult to envision a person creating their own view of how medicine should be practiced relating to where they think the organs should be aesthetically and perhaps trying new cures based on rearrangement. There are some things that should have a mechanics viewpoint rather than an artists. If this position is accepted then it becomes apparant that there is no need for an attitude of absolutism in the discourse between student and teacher. I argue that both are in a position of being educated and the need for rule following and the shorthand of "grades" are absurd. The teacher has the responsibility to develop a situation that is conducive to learning and the student, as stated before, has the responsibilty to learn.

In 1969 I was able to convince the administration at SUNY

Binghamton to purchase several portable television systems. With some difficulty we then convinced the administration in Albany that it was ok to buy these things even if they were made in Japan. I was told that this was the first purchase of anything other than American made television equipment by the SUNY system and when the Ampex salesman attacked me I began to believe. He harangued me with statements doubting my loyalty to the United States, certainly to the labor movement in this country and finished the attack by telling me that if I would just wait then I would be able to buy Ampex made 1/2" portable equipment, they had a prototype and were going to take orders any day now. I told him to stuff it, get the hell out of my studio and not come back until he had machine in hand. I've given up waiting.

I was in an interesting position on the campus. I was not in a department and I taught no classes. Classes came later as did grades. First I taught the only photography class on campus. At one point I had 120 students enrolled in one studio course but that is another story. My charge was to make something happen that related to visual understanding and education. I remembered several experiences with "Educational Television" in the early sixties. One was to observe a group of college students in PA. as they viewed several monitors in a classroom that had no proctor. They reacted in the most amazing ways to the information being given to them. Much of the reaction was childish but some seemed to come from the frustration of not being able to believe what they were watching and certainly they had no control over their situation. I guess in some ways that incident and just generally thinking about technology and

education was how I became interested in working with Video. It seemed to me that there must be better ways to use television as a tool for expression but I really didn't have any answers as to what those ways might be. I knew then and know now that technology is not going to go away and that unless there is some way to temper technology with human sensibilities technology will not serve the culture in general, just those who are in control of it. I hope we are past the era of the AV person in schools who kept machines in closets so students wouldn't break them, I often wondered if the machines were not available because to allow just anyone to use them would eventually weaken the position of the "Professional in Charge".

In 1970, my first approach to video was to lend the portapak's to students and faculty to see what they would do. The only stipulation was that they would have to give the equipment back to me. A year later I proposed to do the same thing in the community and received support from the NYSCA to begin the ETC. We continued to lend portapak's and at the same time began to develop the tools necessary for the artistic exploration of electronic imaging. This led to an artist in residence program that eventually became our primary involvement with video. The community lending program was dropped in 1975.

I think of the ETC as a learning place and not a production house. With very few exceptions the artists in residence at the center accept and I think agree with that definition. The people who work at the center have to learn the systems because we will not act as a production crew. We help if help is needed only in

the understanding of concepts and not in the production itself. My goal is to develop individual artistic expression using electronic technology as the tools. All of my efforts and those of the people connected to the center are aimed toward getting individual studios constructed in order for individuals to create. In essence we are trying to put ourselves out of business, at least the access business. This position is of course contrary to the traditions of television but absolutely necessary if video is to mature as an art form. I find team videomaking about as interesting as team painting or team drawing. The visual expressions that seem the strongest to me have come from one mind and in general have been realized by that individual. My concerns in art and in education are with the individual differences in thinking and not in trying to fit ideas or people into their designated place. In order for individuals to develop thier own studio, the cost of construction must be reasonable. We have our own research and development program aimed at making available tools at low cost. David Jones and Paul Davis have been developing analog and digital devices and software for use by artists and we are close to a point of offering colorizers, keyers, switchers, output amplifiers, oscillators, and other devices. The cost of good 1/2" recorders are within a reasonable range, even editing is not too expensive, I just bought some black and white cameras for less than 100. apiece, computers are cheap, and on and on. My point is that we are quickly coming to a time that the tools are easily available and the major problem will be what to do with them.

The news tells us that industry as we have known it is dead,

information exchange is the coming economic base, the military are sucking up all of the research resources so the economic base will not be able to compete with foreign development, and the concept of cottage industry, working at home is the future. I have discussed with my students the ideas of communicating by computer over long distances at our leisure, sort of the way people use telephone answering services, and they are aghast that I would even consider that approach to teaching. Combined with Video that approach seems to me to be tailor-made for the pursuit of electronic art teaching and if anyone out there has some money and wants to support an educational experiment of this kind this might be my last public appearance.